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Identical letters dated 25 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the forty-ninth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016) and 2393 (2017) (S/2018/243).

Having examined the current report, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates observations it has made on previous similar reports from the Secretariat. It stresses that now that eastern Ghutah has been liberated from armed terrorist groups and an end has been put to the siege imposed on the people of Ghutah and others, new facts have been revealed that yet again confirm beyond the slightest doubt the massive efforts made by all the agencies of the Syrian Government, in cooperation with their partners, to protect Syrian citizens and to provide them with various forms of support and relief to help spare them from the effects of the present crisis.

Eyewitness accounts from the inhabitants of eastern Ghutah have confirmed what the Syrian Government has been trying to tell you all along: For some time, armed terrorist organizations have been seizing the cargo of convoys sent to that region and stopping humanitarian assistance from reaching civilians. Those terrorist organizations have prevented civilians from leaving eastern Ghutah to go to Government-controlled areas so that they can keep using those civilians as human shields. The huge effort currently being made by the Syrian Government and its partners to provide shelter, food, medicine and health care to people leaving Ghutah belies the claims being made by any sceptics about the extent to which the Syrian Government has fulfilled its constitutional responsibility to guarantee the security and safety of its citizens.

The 49 reports submitted up until now have been replete with errors, as we have explained in our previous responses. Those reports have served as an instrument of the policies of certain influential Western States on the Security Council to pressure the Syrian Government and deplete its political capital. The reports have been characterized by a lack of professionalism and objectivity. They have turned a blind eye to violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. That includes violations perpetrated directly through attacks by the United States-led international coalition, the Turkish regime and the Israeli occupation authorities, and also violations perpetrated indirectly through the support provided by

the governing regimes of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Kingdom, France and others to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Nusrah Front terrorist organizations, and to client militias put together by those regimes.

The authors of the reports seem to have no problem with spreading lies devoid of the slightest shred of credibility, and levelling accusations on the basis of those lies. Not only do they ignore proven facts about the crimes being perpetrated against civilians by the armed terrorist groups and their sponsors, but they cover up those crimes by describing them as "allegations" that "the United Nations is not in a position to verify".

From today onward, it will no longer be acceptable for the authors of the reports of the Secretariat to adopt a politicized and biased approach hostile to the Syrian Government. They have completely failed in their allegations and their efforts to divert international attention away from the facts of the humanitarian situation in Syria in order to inflame the situation, prolong the crisis and turn public opinion against the Syrian Government.

The liberation of Ghutah has shortened the list of places that the United Nations calls "hard-to-reach and besieged areas". Full humanitarian access is now possible for the delivery of relief and assistance to the inhabitants of that area. We hope that in Ghutah, the United Nations will not repeat the systematic behaviour that it engaged in in other areas, where it neglected to provide support to areas that have been liberated or have truces. We hope that the United Nations will start to follow a new approach that is in line with the mandate of the United Nations, the principles of its Charter and the provisions of international law. Such an approach would be founded on full cooperation and coordination with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, which is a member of the United Nations and the only party devoted to protecting and supporting Syrians. Such an approach would refuse to capitulate to the political pressures and dictates that are being imposed by certain influential Western States on the Security Council and are not consistent with the principles and values of humanitarian work, the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic looks forward to more constructive approaches on the part of the Secretariat, and to a fundamental change in the positions and behaviour towards the situation in Syria on the part of the people in charge of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It stresses that what Syrians need is enhanced humanitarian work that is not politicized or selective, and that is conducted in the context of full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and support for the efforts of the Syrian Government to confront terrorism. An end must be put to the crimes of the international coalition, which must terminate its presence and illegal activities in Syria. The attacks being launched by the Erdoğan regime must be condemned and stopped. The States sponsoring and supporting terrorist organizations must be compelled to cease their violations of international law and counter-terrorism instruments. The unilateral coercive measures being imposed on Syria must be lifted.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative